United Nations S/2008/781

Security Council

Distr.: General
12 December 2008

Original: English

Report of the Secretary-General on the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 17 of Security Council resolution 1828 (2008), by which the Council requested me to report every 60 days after the adoption of the resolution on developments on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), the political process, the security and humanitarian situation in Darfur, and all parties' compliance with their international obligations. The report covers the months of October and November 2008.

II. Developments relating to UNAMID

2. As at 30 November, the total strength of UNAMID uniformed personnel stood at 12,482, including 9,941 military personnel (9,367 troops, 353 staff officers, 161 military observers and 60 liaison officers), and 2,541 police personnel (2,111 police advisers and three formed police units totalling 430 personnel).

3. The number of civilian personnel stood at 2,962, or 53 per cent of full capacity, consisting of 770 international staff, 1,933 national staff and 259 United Nations Volunteers (UNVs). In addition, 259 personnel are under recruitment (93 international, 78 national and 88 UNVs). It has been difficult to attract and retain staff because of the security situation and harsh living and working conditions. Since 1 January 2008, 58 staff members departed UNAMID owing to resignations, reassignments and end of appointments, and 98 selected candidates rejected offers from UNAMID after completing recruitment requirements.

III. Deployment of UNAMID

4. During the reporting period, a total of 1,363 military and police personnel arrived in Darfur. In mid-October, 325 members of the main body of the Bangladeshi multi-role logistics unit arrived in Nyala. In mid-November, 148 members of the Egyptian transport unit also arrived in Nyala, providing a significant boost to the logistic capability of the force. In Northern Darfur, 490 personnel of the main body of the first Egyptian battalion were deployed to Um Kadada in late November. The balance of 174 members of the Egyptian battalion is

08-64080 (E) 161208

expected to deploy in January 2009 once further engineering work in Um Kadada is completed by the Egyptian Engineering Unit based in El Fasher.

5. Two formed police units, consisting of 140 personnel from Nepal and 140 personnel from Indonesia, arrived in October and were deployed to Nyala and El Fasher, respectively. The rotation of the Bangladeshi formed police unit in Nyala was completed in November.

6. The rotation of the 10 former African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS) infantry battalions already deployed to Darfur is ongoing and will be completed in January 2009. Of these 10 battalions, two are deployed at the United Nations standard strength of 800 personnel. Six battalions will reach 800 total strength by the end of December 2008. The remaining two battalions will be upgraded to United Nations standard strength in early 2009.

7. The Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support of the Secretariat have been working with donors to ensure that the former AMIS battalions are deployed with requisite equipment, including armoured personnel carriers. Many of these troops have been operating with assets provided by donors to AMIS. It is expected that, in accordance with the force requirements, contingent-owned equipment will arrive in Darfur in the first half of 2009, allowing these battalions to operate as self-sustained units.

8. In the coming weeks, a number of military and police units will be deployed to Darfur. The units expected to deploy in December include the Pakistani level III Hospital and its 156 personnel, the 335-strong main body of the Pakistani engineering company, 450 Ethiopian troops from the first infantry battalion, a 300-personnel Ethiopian multi-role logistic unit, a 120-personnel Ethiopian Sector reconnaissance company, a 125-personnel Ethiopian medium transport unit, and two Nigerian formed police units.

9. The deployment of these units was facilitated by the improvement in road conditions at the end of the rainy season, which accelerated the movement, by road, of contingent-owned equipment into Darfur. As part of the United Nations efforts to accelerate deployment, the Department of Field Support and UNAMID have put in place special measures to increase capacity to move equipment to its final destination by air. With the deployment of additional IL76 aircraft, it is anticipated that the mission will have cleared the backlog of contingent-owned equipment at the logistics base in El Obeid by January 2009. The Department of Field Support and UNAMID are also in the process of deploying additional L100-class aircraft to speed up the delivery of contingent-owned equipment to the relatively small airfield in El Geneina. I am also pleased to report that engineering work for the Nyala supercamp is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2008, and the El Fasher and El Geneina supercamps are scheduled to be completed by the end of January 2009.

10. Nevertheless, serious logistical challenges remain. Airport infrastructure and aircraft handling capacity, as well as the possibility of deteriorating runway conditions, will continue to limit the number of daily flights in Darfur. While the capacity for road convoy movement of contingent-owned equipment is increasing, difficult road conditions within Darfur pose particular challenges for the transportation of heavy equipment.

11. The mission has taken measures to increase its engineering capacity, including through the expedited deployment of military engineers, partnership with the United

Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), and recruitment of local contractors. A memorandum of understanding between UNAMID and UNOPS is being finalized to enhance the mission's capacity to construct community police centres and other UNAMID camps and infrastructure as required. UNAMID has also engaged the local market, receiving and evaluating bids from Sudanese vendors operating in Darfur.

12. It is estimated that by the end of December 2008, the total number of uniformed personnel deployed to UNAMID will reach approximately 60 per cent of the authorized strength. This goal will be reached as a result of our efforts to improve the movement of contingent-owned equipment into Darfur, enhance engineering capability, improve cooperation with the Government and work with troop- and police-contributing countries to ensure timely preparations for deployment. Achieving the objective of 80 per cent deployment by March 2009 will require effective action in each of these four areas.

13. Looking ahead, the readiness of troop- and police-contributing countries to deploy military and formed police units will be a particularly important factor in our collective efforts to finally bring UNAMID to its authorized strength. This places a heavy burden on contributing countries. A wide range of equipment must be procured; personnel must be trained on this equipment; systems and materials for maintaining this equipment in Darfur must be put in place; and provisions must be made for these units to sustain themselves in an extremely difficult environment. This is a complex and time-consuming process that is further complicated by the insecurity and political uncertainty in Darfur. It requires troop and police contributors to be meticulous in their preparations to ensure that units they deploy are ready to face the enormous challenges associated with deploying into Darfur. There is, at present, some slippage in these preparations which could result in delays in deployment. This issue is being addressed as a matter of highest priority by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support.

Tripartite mechanism for the deployment of UNAMID

14. In a continued effort to expedite the deployment of UNAMID, the second meeting of the Tripartite Committee was held on 16 November 2008. During the meeting, consensus was reached between the Government of the Sudan, the African Union Commission and the United Nations that the concrete steps taken to implement the agreements reached at the Tripartite Committee meeting on 7 October had been successful.

15. In addition to the follow-up from the 7 October meeting, UNAMID informed the Government of the Sudan that four tactical helicopters, pledged by Ethiopia, might be deployed sooner than previously anticipated. The Government of the Sudan agreed to work jointly with UNAMID to put in place any interim arrangements and undertake any preparation required for the deployment of these critical assets.

16. UNAMID also requested Government support to place one transport helicopter in each of the supercamps in order to allow for rapid medical evacuation. The Government agreed in principle to the proposal, and requested UNAMID to work with the relevant officials to develop the necessary implementation protocol. Lastly, the Government agreed to meet with UNAMID to discuss the allocation to the Mission of a frequency for a United Nations broadcast radio system for Darfur. It

was agreed that the next Tripartite Committee meeting on UNAMID would take place in January 2009 in Addis Ababa.

IV. UNAMID operations

17. The security level in Darfur remains at Phase IV. The continuous threat is characterized by high levels of banditry, carjacking, military engagements and deadly attacks on UNAMID forces. On 29 October, a peacekeeper was killed and another was injured after being attacked while guarding a water-point near the Kassab camp for internally displaced persons in Kutum, Northern Darfur. On 9 November, during an ambush of a UNAMID convoy travelling between the UNAMID supercamp and El Geneina road, one peacekeeper was injured and a vehicle was taken. During the reporting period, a total of 33 vehicles (17 belonging to the United Nations) and 11 trucks contracted by the World Food Programme (WFP) were hijacked.

18. Despite the heightened insecurity, UNAMID conducted 1,027 confidence-building patrols, 318 escort patrols and 29 investigation patrols during the reporting period, with an emphasis on facilitating humanitarian access and providing convoy protection. UNAMID police advisers also continued to conduct monitoring, confidence-building and firewood patrols, visiting community policing centres and Government police stations throughout Darfur. Farming patrols also continued throughout the region, contributing to a more secure environment for internally displaced persons and the local population to harvest their crops. In addition, UNAMID devised a zoning system in the camps of internally displaced persons, targeting areas of tension or insecurity for patrols, thus enhancing the effectiveness of its activities.

19. Following the shooting incident on 25 August at Kalma camp of internally displaced persons, where 32 such persons were killed and at least 85 injured, UNAMID continued to provide a 24/7 presence around Kalma camp, and established a mission-wide integrated approach to pursuing its mandate to protect internally displaced persons. The integrated approach, which will be implemented in three stages of conflict prevention, crisis response and post-crisis management, will require strong collaboration between UNAMID and the humanitarian community and full respect, by all parties, of their obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law, Security Council resolutions and ceasefire agreements.

20. The approach recognizes the need for strengthened links between internally displaced persons, humanitarian interlocutors and relevant Government authorities to ensure that camps of internally displaced persons function as protected civilian communities. In the meantime, the Government set up a committee at state and national level to investigate the incident of 25 August. No public findings have been released and no individuals have been investigated or held responsible so far.

21. Community policing initiatives and investigation training for interventions in sexual and gender-based violence have started in all three sectors. These initiatives are designed to foster a closer partnership between the Government of the Sudan's Police, the movements and communities. In addition, a five-day training course on community policing was organized for the sheikhs in Abu Shouk camp of internally displaced persons in Northern Darfur.

22. UNAMID continued to engage local and national stakeholders and provide technical and advisory support to the peace process and local conflict resolution initiatives. The mission convened five training workshops on peace negotiations, mediation and leadership and on the Darfur Peace Agreement for civil society organizations, leaders of internally displaced persons and local administration leaders in Northern and Western Darfur; it also facilitated the resolution of four disputes among armed movements in Southern and Western Darfur. In addition, 56 quick-impact projects totalling $1.2 million were approved by UNAMID. Sixty per cent of the projects are in the education sector, mainly in Northern Darfur.

23. During the reporting period, UNAMID faced some restrictions on its freedom of movement. On 6 October, two demining experts contracted by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), who were travelling to Darfur with ID cards from the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS), were stopped by Government officials at the Nyala airport for not possessing UNAMID identification or national passports. A staff member of the Service was called to intervene but was threatened with arrest and forced to leave Darfur on the first available flight on 7 October.

24. On 20 October, a UNAMID force escorting a Canadian delegation was denied access by the Government of the Sudan to Abu Shouk camp of internally displaced persons, Northern Darfur. On the same day, the Government banned a Mine Action Service team in Kutum from using GPS and digital cameras and from undertaking a casualty evacuation exercise mandatory for demining operations. The Government insisted on monitoring Mine Action Service operations as a precondition for its GPS use, a practice discouraged by the mine action safety procedure. The Mine Action Service made efforts until 15 November to resolve the problem; however, it was eventually forced to give up demining activities in Kutum, and relocated its staff to Tawila.

25. On 24 October, a joint Government of the Sudan military/police patrol stopped a UNAMID patrol in El Geneina, Western Darfur, and subsequently ordered UNAMID to stop conducting night patrols in the town. Previously, at a meeting on 22 October between UNAMID and Government officials (including representatives of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) and the Police), the Government had stated that patrols in towns were its responsibility and UNAMID should limit its patrols to camps of internally displaced persons exclusively. On the same day, a UNAMID patrol returning to Kutum was diverted to Um Baru because of clashes between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan-Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid (SLA/AW) in the area. There were also reports of Government aerial bombardments of villages in Kutum that day.

26. In addition, a one-month visa for a mission of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Sudan (Khartoum and Darfur) was unilaterally replaced by a seven-day visa on 26 October, and upon the mission's arrival in Khartoum, the Advisory Council for Human Rights decided to ban its travel to Darfur.

27. On 27 November 2008, NISS in Nyala Airport denied two Sudanese staff of a non-governmental organization (NGO) the right to travel to East Jebel Marra. On the same day, two other NGO national staff were denied travel to El Geneina by NISS at the airport. In Ed Daein, a routine food distribution by a humanitarian NGO

was also stopped by Government officials, who alleged that the food was not fit for human consumption.

V. Security situation

28. The security situation continued to be of concern during the reporting period owing to, inter alia, Government aerial bombardments and clashes between SAF and the armed rebel movements. In October, forces of the Government of the Sudan, supported by militia, engaged in military operations focused on reinforcing their positions and driving the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA)/Unity from their areas of control. These military activities have led UNAMID to identify "no go areas" for United Nations personnel for reasons of safety, particularly east of Jebel Marra (Northern Darfur).

29. In Muhajeria and surrounding areas in Southern Darfur, seven separate armed tribal clashes reportedly took place from 5 to 11 October involving Ma'aliya, Messeriya and Birgid tribes, on one hand, and members of the Zaghawa tribe, on the other. At least 41 men and three children were killed and many were injured during the fighting. Seven women were reportedly raped during the clashes, a large amount of cultivated land was burnt and livestock was looted.

30. Despite the unilateral declaration of a cessation of hostilities by the Government on 12 November, aerial bombings were reportedly conducted in different locations in Northern Darfur, including Kurbia, Um Mahareik, Wadi Fede and Sayah between 12 and 15 November and in Jebel Moon, Kulbus and Silea (Western Darfur) on 17 November.

31. On 16 November, Government troops on patrol were ambushed in the Graida area in Southern Darfur. On the same day, Government police forces came under gunfire while conducting routine patrols between the cities of Buram and Joghana. This resulted in the death of two Government police officers.

32. UNAMID investigated reports of aerial attacks by the Government of the Sudan carried out on 21 and 22 November in Abu Dangal, Southern Darfur, and confirmed visible effects of air strikes, including four craters created by bombing and the presence of unexploded ordnance.

33. UNAMID continued to monitor human rights violations and abuses throughout Darfur, in particular violations of the right to life and security of the person, and sexual and gender-based violence. During the reporting period, UNAMID documented three incidents of excessive use of force by the Government, namely the Sudan security forces, in camps for the displaced. On 10 and 11 October two internally displaced persons were killed and at least eight others were injured, including an 8-year-old girl, when SAF soldiers entered Nertiti camp of internally displaced persons, in Zalingei, Western Darfur, and opened fire in the vicinity of the internally displaced persons.

34. During the reporting period, the mission continued to receive reports of the use of torture and ill-treatment against detainees in the custody of NISS. Four such cases were documented in Zalingei. The frequency of the cases, combined with the consistency of victims' accounts, points to the regular practice of torture or ill-treatment by NISS during interrogation of persons suspected of involvement with non-signatory movements. The tenth periodic report of the United Nations High

Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, issued on 28 November 2008, also points to a trend of arbitrary arrest and detention by NISS in Darfur.

35. Sexual and gender-based violence continues to occur, often in tandem with impunity and a lack of action from law enforcement authorities. Internally displaced women and girls conducting livelihood activities, such as gathering firewood or fetching water, remain most vulnerable. During the reporting period, UNAMID documented 19 incidents of gender-based violence, involving 54 victims, 24 of whom were reportedly raped. Almost all of the victims were internally displaced persons, the majority from Fur communities, with other victims from Erenga, Massalit and Zaghawa tribes. In nine cases, perpetrators were reportedly SAF members and/or men wearing military uniforms; two involved the Central Reserve Police (CRP), and seven involved suspected militia.

36. Of the 19 sexual and gender-based violence cases, only five were reported to and registered by the police. Four cases were not registered because of the absence of a police presence in the area, and in two cases the police declined to register them. Increased documentation of sexual and gender-based violence incidents may be partially attributed to the fact that, owing to the onset of the harvest season, women and girls are spending more time away from the relative safety of villages and camps of internally displaced persons and are thus more vulnerable to attacks.

37. In addition to taking forward mandated tasks within the limits of its capabilities, UNAMID is implementing a Security Enhancement Plan designed to mitigate the level of security risks to which staff are exposed by addressing key security-related issues: (a) protecting military camps and team sites against small arms fire and intrusion, (b) reducing vehicle hijacking, (c) relocating vulnerable compounds as well as providing temporary emergency accommodation to staff members in housing non-compliant with Minimum Operating Residential Security Standards (MORSS), (d) enhancing medical treatment and evacuation capacity, (e) enhancing command and control related to the implementation of security measures, (f) enhancing military mobility and (g) validating and updating evacuation plans.

38. The Darfur Integrated Security Task Force, which was created following the 25 August incident at Kalma camp, met for the first time on 26 November in Khartoum. UNAMID and the Government of the Sudan discussed the security situation in Darfur, requirements for a ceasefire-monitoring mechanism and the security risks of Kalma camp. The two sides agreed to hold regular monthly meetings, starting in January 2008.

VI. Humanitarian situation

39. Humanitarian aid organizations continue to struggle to maintain existing programmes and expand operations to recently accessible areas. The critical humanitarian challenges continue to be those of access and protection of civilians. The total number of new displacements this year has reportedly reached nearly 310,000 people. While this displacement or re-displacement is only temporary, the destruction, including of humanitarian infrastructure, and consequent delays in relief assistance redouble the suffering of the people of Darfur.

40. During the reporting period, 28 humanitarian vehicles were hijacked, including one hospital ambulance. Thirty-nine humanitarians were abducted during those hijacking incidents and 13 humanitarian premises were attacked by armed men. Moreover, 10 humanitarian convoys were stopped and looted and 21 humanitarian premises broken into or destroyed. On 14 October, an office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Mukhjar (Western Darfur) was attacked by Chadian refugees, who assaulted the staff and damaged vehicles and property. As a result of those targeted attacks, humanitarian staff relocated on two occasions.

41. The Government for its part has expressed frustration over the publication of data on the conflict in Darfur by the humanitarian community, and the absence of joint assessments which could attempt to produce consolidated figures as requested by the Humanitarian Aid Commission. In addition, the Government shared its concern over incidents of criminality and arms smuggling and the limited or blocked access by the local authorities to large camps of internally displaced persons, such as Kalma and the three Zalingei camps (Hamadiya, Hassa Hissa and Khamsa Dagaigo), preventing them from developing programmes in those camps. Following the incident in Kalma camp of internally displaced persons on 25 August 2008, one of UNAMID's attempts to reinforce the healing process has been to bring together local leaders of internally displaced persons and local authorities.

42. In a welcome development on 18 November, the Government of the Sudan announced the extension of the moratorium which facilitates the provision of humanitarian aid to Darfur until 31 January 2010. That development is expected to enhance the delivery of humanitarian assistance to up to 4.7 million conflict-affected persons.

43. On 24 November 2008, the Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, John Holmes, began his second visit to the Sudan to assess the challenging humanitarian situation in Darfur as well as to review the humanitarian situation in Southern Sudan. He noted that the humanitarian community continues to face challenges, and underlined the fact that the long-term presence of large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons is resulting in growing tensions and places an additional strain on an already fragile environment. He concluded that what is most urgently needed is a ceasefire, declared and respected by all parties, and a negotiated settlement to the conflict.

VII. Political process

44. In October, the Sudan People's Forum (SPF) was launched by President Omar Al-Bashir. The initiative represented an important step in the effort to find a political solution to the Darfur crisis. It was attended by senior leaders of all of the Sudan's main political parties, with the exception of the Popular Congress Party and the Sudan Communist Party, and included numerous representatives from Darfur, though not from the Darfur armed movements. A wide range of issues were discussed, including security, power-sharing and wealth-sharing.

45. The SPF concluded on 12 November with President Al-Bashir's announcement of an immediate unilateral ceasefire subject to the establishment of a ceasefire-monitoring mechanism, as well as the setting up of a programme for disarming militia groups and a community police service for camps of internally displaced

persons. The President also agreed, in principle, to individual and collective compensation for the victims of the conflict. He also agreed to end hostile propaganda and to discuss with the people of Darfur an increase in the number of States, from the current three. The issues of a single Darfur region and a Vice-President for Darfur were deferred. Some armed movements, including the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), have publicly rejected the conclusions of SPF, including the President's declaration of a unilateral ceasefire.

46. As a next step, SPF will seek to solicit the views of Darfurian stakeholders who were not represented during its meetings in Kenana, including the armed movements, internally displaced persons and civilians in those areas controlled by the armed movements, Darfurians in Khartoum and in the diaspora.

47. The Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation (DDDC) continues to provide a forum for discussions among a wide range of stakeholders in support of the peace process. During the reporting period, meetings were hosted by the peace centres at Darfur's three universities, representing an investment in capacity and institution-building for the region.

48. During the reporting period, the Joint Chief Mediator, Djibril Bassolé, undertook extensive consultations with the parties in an effort to obtain a commitment to expediently resolve the Darfur conflict. He met several times with senior officials of the Government of the Sudan as well as Abdul Wahid (SLA/AW), Khalil Ibrahim (JEM), SLA/Unity and the United Resistance Front. The Government of the Sudan and the rebel movements pledged to work closely with the Joint Chief Mediator on a framework agreement which would encompass the timing, venue, format and agenda for talks as well as a commitment to a cessation of hostilities. During his consultations, the Joint Chief Mediator has stressed the importance of security and the need for the parties to put an end to hostilities. As a follow-up to President Al-Bashir's unilateral declaration of a cessation of hostilities, the Joint Chief Mediator has been working with the parties and UNAMID to explore mechanisms for monitoring a cessation-of-hostilities agreement.

49. In October and November, the Joint Chief Mediator also met extensively with other stakeholders, including the Government of Qatar and the countries of the region. On 15 November, he also briefed the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council, where he stressed the importance of improved relations between Chad and the Sudan. During his discussions, the Joint Chief Mediator reiterated the importance of coordinated efforts and initiatives and emphasized the need for all Member States to use their influence on the parties to move towards a sustainable solution to the Darfur conflict. To that end, he participated in the Dakar Contact Group meeting held on 15 November in N'Djamena, where he also had extensive consultations with officials of the Government of Chad. On 27 to 30 November, Mr. Bassolé also held consultations on Darfur on the sidelines of the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus in Doha. The Mediation has been working closely with the Government of Qatar on the possibility that peace talks may be held in Doha when the parties are ready to resume direct negotiations.

50. On 10 October, a joint delegation of Qatar, the African Union and the League of Arab States visited the three States of Darfur to discuss the possibility of peace talks in Doha. When the delegation met with the Governors of the three States, civil

society, and the UNAMID leadership, they reiterated their readiness to work closely with the AU-United Nations Joint Chief Mediator and UNAMID.

51. On 13 October, SAF and the Sudan Liberation Army/Minni Minnawi (SLA/MM) signed a memorandum of understanding on political and military coordination in El Fasher. Referred to as the "El Fasher Declaration", it is a product of the Joint Military Committee established following the meeting between Vice-President Osman Taha and SLA leader Minni Minnawi last September.

52. The Memorandum of Understanding outlines joint activities of the two parties with a view to looking into possible compensation for the death and damages resulting from the recent hostilities in East Jebel Marra, coordinating security arrangements in Darfur, encouraging and protecting trade and humanitarian access within the region, and bringing non-signatories of the Darfur Peace Agreement into the political process. In line with the Memorandum of Understanding, President Al-Bashir issued a decree directing the incorporation of the Darfur Peace Agreement into the interim constitution, which is currently being examined by the National Constitutional Commission, to be finalized and sent for adoption during the next session of the National Assembly. However, SLA/MM continues to deplore the lack of action by the Government to release funds for jointly agreed socio-economic projects.

53. On 6 and 7 November, an African Union fact-finding mission led by the former President of Burundi, Pierre Buyoya, visited Darfur to look into the relations between Chad and the Sudan, evaluate the efforts made so far to resolve the crisis and present recommendations to the African Union on the way forward. On 9 November, Chad and the Sudan exchanged ambassadors, and on 15 November both countries sent representatives to participate in the Dakar Agreement Contact Group meeting in N'Djamena.

VIII. Observations

54. Almost one year after the transfer of authority from AMIS to UNAMID, the AU-United Nations Operation continues to face enormous challenges. Violence and displacement continue, humanitarian operations are at risk, clashes between the parties occur with regrettable regularity and the parties have not yet reached a negotiated peace agreement.

55. In this environment, UNAMID has focused on the protection of civilians and the deployment of the remainder of the military and police components. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to all troop- and police-contributing countries and donors, including the Friends of UNAMID, for their continued support for the mission. I also reiterate my appeal to those that are in a position to provide mission-critical capabilities to do so without further delay. Thus far, pledges for a multi-role logistics unit, a medium transport unit, a heavy transport unit, an aerial reconnaissance unit, light tactical helicopters, and 18 medium-utility helicopters are still outstanding.

56. Sustained Government support and cooperation will also continue to be critical to our efforts to deploy UNAMID and to the ability of the mission to carry out its mandated tasks. In this context, I welcome the Government of the Sudan's implementation of the Tripartite Committee's recommendations and count on the

Government to ensure implementation of those recommendations at all levels, both national and local.

57. At the same time, the Government has also made efforts to rejuvenate internal political dialogue through the multi-party SPF initiative. These efforts could potentially contribute to a negotiated settlement for Darfur. However, real progress can be measured only through concrete actions. To build confidence and demonstrate its seriousness, the Government will have to rapidly implement the SPF recommendations. It will be crucial that consultations take place in the Darfur States and that the Government follows through on the pledges it has made with respect to compensation, development aid and collaboration with the armed groups.

58. I welcomed President Al-Bashir's unilateral declaration on 12 November of a cessation of hostilities. However, I am greatly disappointed that military activity by the Government continues. The reports of violence, clashes and aerial bombardments since the unilateral ceasefire declaration of 12 November are of serious concern. They do not echo the constructive intent reflected in the Government's statements. I call again on all parties to use restraint and renew their commitment to an immediate and unconditional cessation of hostilities.

59. A genuine cessation of hostilities is an essential precondition for the peaceful dialogue that will be necessary for peace talks to succeed. By ending hostilities, the parties can demonstrate their seriousness with respect to a political settlement. The AU-United Nations Joint Chief Mediator has been making progress on developing a framework agreement, which will form the basis for substantive peace talks when the parties are ready. His success depends on the parties' willingness to constructively engage in the peace process and the unwavering support of the international community to ensure that all other initiatives coalesce under Mr. Bassolé's mediation efforts.

60. The cessation of hostilities is also required to facilitate delivery of vital humanitarian assistance. I am deeply concerned that insecurity continues to seriously affect civilians and hamper the humanitarian community's efforts to provide them with life-saving assistance.

61. I welcome the Government's extension of the joint communiqué on humanitarian access and urge the Government to do more to ensure that those agreements are fulfilled in Khartoum and in Darfur. I also call on the Government to comply with its obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law, in particular with regard to the protection of civilians. While the situation at Kalma has stabilized following the incident of 25 August, there are still disturbing reports of intimidation and harassment of internally displaced persons, especially women, who are the victims of marauding militia groups.

62. With respect to the application of 14 July by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court for an arrest warrant against President Al-Bashir, the United Nations respects the independence of the Court and its judicial process, and stresses the critical importance of full compliance by all parties with the actions of the Court. Our peacekeeping operations and humanitarian and development work in the Sudan will continue in an impartial manner, cooperating in good faith with all partners to further the goal of peace and stability in the country.

63. Despite the constructive declarations over the reporting period, the fighting in Darfur continues, innocent civilians still suffer, UNAMID and humanitarian

personnel are under threat and the parties have failed to seriously pursue a political solution. I cannot overemphasize the need for the parties to demonstrate their commitment to a peaceful settlement of the Darfur conflict by undertaking concrete actions to reduce violence and ease human suffering. Ultimately, peace cannot be imposed. Both the Government of the Sudan and the armed rebel movements must come to the realization that violence will not achieve the objectives they seek and that the crisis in Darfur can be resolved only through political negotiations and a comprehensive and inclusive peace agreement.